

# LETTER

ON

## COLONIZATION,

ADDRESSED TO THE

REV. THORNTON J. MILLS,

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE KENTUCKY COLONIZATION  
SOCIETY.

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BY JAMES G. BIRNEY, ESQ.

LATE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE KENTUCKY COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

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JAMES G. BIRNEY, ESQ.,

The author of the following letter, is a gentleman of education and fortune, a native of Kentucky, and allied by birth and marriage to many of the principal families of that state. He has resided fifteen years in Alabama, where he maintained the highest standing, both as a citizen and a professional man. For several years he has been known throughout the South West, as a devoted, exemplary, and influential Christian. On his return to Kentucky, he was elected first Vice President of the State Colonization Society. In 1832, he was appointed by the American Colonization Society, their permanent agent, with a liberal salary, for Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas, and he faithfully laboured in the cause. His writings were copied with approbation in the official magazine of the Society. No man has a better knowledge of colonization, and its practical effects at the south. Few could have made greater sacrifices than he has done, by espousing, advocating, and practising sentiments so obnoxious and unpopular as those of an "Abolitionist." No document before the public on any subject exhibits greater ability. Such a man has a right to be heard, and his arguments should be weighed with respect by every citizen of this nation.

# LETTER

OF

JAMES G. BIRNEY.



[AS the writer of the following letter is not extensively known in the eastern states, it is deemed proper to state, that in the south west, he has maintained the highest standing both as a citizen, a Christian and a professional man. A native of Kentucky, and connected by birth and marriage with most of the leading families of the state, he resided 15 years in Alabama, and was in the way to its highest honors. He was Solicitor General, had the offer of a seat on the bench of the supreme court, and was appointed by the Legislature to nominate, at his sole discretion, the Faculty of the State University. Since his return to Kentucky, he has been offered the professorship of Political Economy, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, in Centre College at Danville.

His character and influence as a Christian are understood to be equal to his public standing. His acquaintance with colonization and slavery may be learned from his letter, which we commend to a careful perusal, as a document rarely equalled for candor, kindness, depth of thought and intellectual greatness. He has, *of course*, emancipated his own slaves.]

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*To the Rev. THORNTON J. MILLS, Corresponding Secretary of  
the Kentucky Colonization Society.*

SIR :—At the annual meeting of the “Kentucky Colonization Society” in January last, it pleased the members to elect me one of its Vice Presidents. I am by no means insensible to the favorable opinion, which placed me in company with such able and honorable associates : but I should be unworthy of it, and wanting in respect to the officers and members, did I not frankly avow, that my opinions of colonization, in some of its most essential features, have undergone a change, so great, as to make it imperative on me no longer to give to the enterprise that support and favor which are justly expected from all connected with it.

In leaving my station, it is due to the gentlemen with whom I

have been associated, as well as to myself, that I should at least give some of the reasons which have persuaded me to this course. That all the grounds necessary for an impartial and intelligent judgment may be exhibited, I think it not unimportant to state, though very briefly, the relation in which I have, for many years, stood to the cause of colonization. Although a native of Kentucky, I resided for fifteen years previously to last autumn, in the state of Alabama. It was in the year 1826, not very long after the publication of the "African Repository" was begun, at a time when little had been said, at least in the West and Southwest, on the subject of colonization, that it first arrested my attention. I considered it, and I doubt not by very many of those who gave it their early support it was intended, as a scheme of benevolence to the whole colored population, and as a germ of effort capable of expansion adequate to our largest necessities in the extermination of slavery. It was on the 4th of July of this year, that, uniting my own to the contributions of other gentlemen and ladies privately solicited by myself, I was enabled to send on to the Treasurer of the "American Colonization Society" the first collection of money, so far as my information extends, that was made for its purposes in Huntsville, the place of my residence. If I remember accurately, collections were afterwards taken up, and the subject presented to the congregation from the pulpit for several successive 4ths of July, in the church I attended.

In the summer of 1832, I received from the Secretary of the American Colonization Society a letter announcing to me my appointment as its general Agent for the district composed of Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas. The compensation to be received for my services, though far inferior to the avails of my professional labors, was altogether liberal. It was, indeed, as much as I would have demanded, in the existing state of the society's means, had it been left to me to fix the amount. After taking such time as I thought necessary for deliberation in a matter so nearly touching my private interest, against the advice of nearly all my friends I consented to undertake the agency; so strongly was I impelled by the belief that it was a great work of philanthropy to which I was summoned, and that it could *even in the South*, be conducted to eminent success, especially when undertaken by one of her own citizens (himself from boyhood a slaveholder) who could bring to the aid of prudence and a sound character only moderate qualifications of talent and address. The claims of colonization I presented very fully at nearly all the important points in the district assigned me, with a zeal that was unchecked by ordinary obstacles, and with a success disproportioned to be sure to the sanguine expectations with which I had set out, but not perhaps to the genuine merits of the cause. I have thought proper, thus, very cursorily,

to refer to the circumstances mentioned above, not only to show that I have been in a situation affording good opportunities to judge of the operation of the principles upon which colonization has been recommended and urged upon the public mind, but that I have been habitually friendly to it; zealous in promoting its success, and therefore inclined to indulge toward it a favorable judgment.

It might not, however, be improper further to add, that Mr. Polk of Washington arrived in Huntsville as Agent of the American Colonization Society, in the end of 1829. After he had consulted with several of the most intelligent and philanthropic gentlemen of the place, together with myself, it was determined upon, in order to embody and excite to activity so much of public sentiment as might be found favorable, to attempt the organization of an auxiliary Colonization Society. In this effort, successful beyond what had been looked for, I gave such aid as I was capable of giving, by an address to the assembly favorable to the proposition. The society, thus organized, contained within it the very best materials the place afforded, and its reception by the community was, at first, encouraging beyond expectation.

This was the first instance of direct action in the South, for the benefit of any part of the colored population, of which I then had a personal knowledge. I was greatly encouraged at the favorable aspect of things on this, the first trial, for it was made in a town where, considering its size, there is unusual concentration of intelligence, and in the very midst of a population numbering a majority of blacks. At that time, I believed there was in the project so much of a vivifying spirit, that to ensure success it was only necessary for the people of the South *once* to become interested in it, that there was in it so much of the energy of life that it required nothing more than *once* to be set on foot, to put beyond all question its continuance and growth. As auxiliary to the impulses of benevolence, I calculated upon the *selfish* advantages to the South. These I thought, could be so clearly and powerfully exhibited, that there would be none to gainsay or resist, and that by the union of benevolence and selfishness, the co-operation of the whole South might be secured. I unhesitatingly declare, that the total incongruity of these two principles did not strike my mind as it has done, since I witnessed their dissociable and mutually destructive energy. Of the truth of this remark, the Huntsville society will furnish good evidence, for notwithstanding its auspicious beginning, and the excitement of eloquent and animating addresses, delivered, at different times, by gentlemen of distinguished ability, it never was efficient, its excitability wore away as it advanced in age, and it protracted a languishing existence until last autumn, when, I apprehend, it terminated its being except in name.

Other instances might be given tending to confirm the same remark. Mr. Polk succeeded, under the most encouraging circumstances, in organizing a *State Society*, at Tuscaloosa, the seat of government. It was whilst the Supreme Court, and the Legislature of the state were in session. The most conspicuous gentlemen, racinbers of the bar, bench, and of the general assembly, became members, and very many of them, if I mistake not, *life members*. This society, a year afterwards, held its regular meeting. The proceedings were somewhat of a dissentious, not to say disorderly character. It never met again. In 1832, I made an attempt, in the prosecution of my agency, to revive it, but its vitality was thoroughly expended.

In New Orleans, as in Alabama, a colonization society had been formed a few years ago, consisting of more than eighty members; and including in that number many gentlemen of the highest distinction for private worth, intelligence and public influence in the state. When I was there, last year, it was with great difficulty that some half dozen members could be assembled to transact any business connected with the advancement of the cause; the expedition for Liberia just on the eve of sailing from that port, produced no friendly excitement; the vessel [Ajax] carrying out one hundred and fifty emigrants was permitted to loose from the levee, with no effort by the friends of colonization there, to produce the least throb of sympathy in the public mind; and a *city meeting* of which due notice had been carefully given, failed utterly, in consequence of the absence or the fears of gentlemen who had promised to participate in the public exercises. I mention the institution of the society at Huntsville, and its decline, not for the purpose of giving its history as a matter of interest in itself, nor solely, with the view of showing my friendly disposition towards colonization; but as an instance (to which the condition of the others mentioned, as well as that of all the smaller societies throughout the region in which I acted, might be added,) falling under my own observation, tending to demonstrate the truth of a proposition that every day's experience is making more palpable to my mind, that there is not in colonization any principle, or quality, or constituent substance fitted so to tell upon the hearts and minds of men as to ensure continued and persevering action. If there be the connexion supposed, between the facts introduced above, and the proposition just stated, may I not ask you, sir, if the little that has been done for colonization by our own state, where years ago it was welcomed with open arms, and within whose limits I could not state from personal knowledge that it has a single enemy, and the present crippled and unmoving condition of the numerous societies, auxiliary to that whose correspondence you so ably conduct, do not furnish testimony very powerful, if not irresistible, that the whole matter

has not in it any principle exciting to *strenuous*—to *continuous* action ?

In stating the objections that exist in my mind to colonization, I wish it to be understood distinctly at the outset, that I do not, in the slightest degree, impute to the benevolent individuals by whom it was originated, or even to a large majority of those by whom it is still warmly cherished, any unworthy motive as prompting their zeal. Whilst I very cheerfully attribute to this majority stainless purity of motive in what they have done, and are doing ; and further, a strong persuasion, that it is the only means of rescue from the polluting and crushing folds of slavery ; I should be insincere, were I not to state my belief, that colonization, if not supported, is not objected to, by many a keen sighted slave holder *in the abstract*, who has perspicacity enough to discern that the dark system in which he has involved himself, his posterity and their interests, will remain as unaffected by it, as mid-ocean by the discharge of a pop gun on the beach.

Nor do I intend to be understood, as making any objection to the purpose of the American Colonization Society, as expressed in its constitution, “to promote a plan for colonizing (*with their consent*) the free people of color residing in our country, in Africa, or such other place as Congress may deem most expedient.” If its operations be limited to the gratification of an intelligent wish, on the part of the free people of color, or any other class of our population, to remove to Africa, with the view of establishing a colony for the prosecution of an honest commerce, or for any lawful purpose whatever, there could exist, so far as I can see, no reasonable ground of opposition, any more than to the migration, that is now in progress, of crowds of our fellow citizens to Texas or any other part of Mexico. If, on the other hand, it is meant, that this “*consent*” may lawfully be obtained by the imposition of civil disabilities, disfranchisement, exclusion from sympathy ; by making the free colored man the victim of a relentless proscription, prejudice and scorn ; by rejecting altogether his oath in courts of justice, thus leaving his property, his person, his wife, his children, and all that God has by his very constitution made dear to him, unprotected from the outrage and insult of every unfeeling tyrant, it becomes a solemn farce, it is the refinement of inhumanity, a mockery of all mercy, it is cruel, unmanly, and meriting the just indignation of every American, and the noble nation that bears his name. To say that the expression of “*consent*” thus extorted is the *approbation of the mind*, is as preposterous as to affirm that a man *consents* to surrender his purse, on the condition that you spare his life, or, to be transported to Botany Bay, when the hand of despotism is ready to stab him to the heart.

Now, if the Colonization Society has done—is doing this ; if it has succeeded in bringing around it, the learned, the religious, the influential ; if by the multiplied resolutions of favoring legislatures, of ecclesiastical bodies, with their hundred conventions, assemblies, conferences, and associations, it has so far exalted itself into the high places of public sentiment, as itself to constitute public sentiment ; if it has acquired great authority over the mind of this people, and uses it to encourage, and not to check this heartless and grinding oppression ; if, instead of pleading for mercy to the weak and helpless, it sanctifies the most open and crushing injustice, or even connives at it, by urging the necessity of colonization upon the alleged ground of the immutability of this state of things, for the perpetuation of which it is lending all its influence ; if, I say, it has done this, its unsoundness, its foulness cannot be too soon, or too fully exposed, that the just sentence of condemnation may be passed upon it by every good man and patriot of the land.

When, also, in the progress of its developement, it throws itself before the public, as the only effectual and appropriate remedy for slavery, demanding upon that ground, of the whole country a monopoly of its support, it is objectionable, as seems to me, because of the principles upon which it is pressed upon the attention of the community, because of their practical results, and of the utter inadequacy of colonization, whilst in connection with these principles, to the extinguishment of slavery. In order that the objections may be more distinctly exhibited, they will be arranged under the several general heads of

1. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF COLONIZATION UPON THE WHITES.
2. UPON THE COLORED POPULATION ;—and
3. UPON AFRICA.

### 1. *The practical influence of Colonization upon the Whites.*

All great revolutions of sentiment in masses of men, calling, of course, for a corresponding change of action, must lay their foundation in some great *principle* (or principles) undeniably true in theory ; which all the facts pertaining to it, when taken singly *tend* to prove, and taken together, fully establish as true, to all unprejudiced minds. Thus in religion—the great truth—*man's entire alienation from God*—is the only one that has ever been used successfully, to make men feel their need of the remedy proposed by the gospel. All paring away, or attenuation of this truth has, I apprehend, been attended with a corresponding inefficacy in the application of the remedy, and simply on this ground ; that the various phases, and conditions, and circumstances of man's moral malady, tend individually, to indicate this truth



and no other, and in the aggregate to establish it. The progress of the temperance cause will supply another illustration of this position. The great truth here was—that *Alcohol taken in any quantity—and in proportion to that quantity, is injurious to persons in health.* Many attempts at public reformation had been made in former times, on the diluted principle, that alcohol is injurious only when taken *immoderately.* They were all unsuccessful. When the total exclusion from ordinary use of *ardent spirits,* was insisted upon, and a nearer approach to the true principle was made, there followed a proportionate success—so great, indeed, as to entitle the change effected in the habits of the nation to the name of ‘Reformation.’ But, I doubt not, if it is to be made still more thorough, or even to be held at its present state of tension, a resort to the true principle of entire abstinence from every thing alcoholic will be found necessary.

Again, Sir. What was the great truth, or principle, upon which the American Revolution was supported? Was it any other than this, that ‘*all men are created equal?*’ This was the trunk throwing out towards heaven its noble branches, ‘*that they are endowed by their Creator, with the inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*’ You, I am sure, Sir, do not believe, that this principle, had it suffered the least adulteration, would have been sufficiently vivifying to produce the great revolution that it did produce, in our condition; or, that had it been polluted by the smallest ingredient recognizing as true, the right of one man to reign over his fellow men, for *his own* and not *their* benefit; or that a knot of nobility were entitled to privileges independently of merit; or that men might justly be compelled to worship God in a way which did violence to their consciences; or, that in fine, had the least particle of impure leaven been kneaded into the elevating declaration of man’s equality, it would have retained that indistructible vigor, which is, this moment, undermining the foundation of every tyrant’s throne on earth.

Whatever of truth there may be in the foregoing remarks, I wish to apply it to the subject before us; to the attempt to show, that the principles on which colonization is recommended to the nation, are unsound, imperfect and repugnant—Therefore, that they will not, nay cannot, so long as man’s nature remains as it is, operate efficiently in producing a revolution in our present habits so great as to extinguish slavery. The very nature of mind, confirmed by all observation, proves the correctness of this remark, that, when men are to be moved from their present position still further on, *in a line with their habits, or prejudices, or passions,* a false principle may be altogether adequate, but when *in opposition to them,* the principle on which action is demanded must be founded in the nature of things—it must be *truth.*

Now the grounds upon which colonization has asked for favor from the people of the United States, are mainly these. 1. That slavery, *as it is*, in our country, is *justifiable*, or that *immediate* emancipation is out of the question. 2. That the free colored people are, of all classes in the community, the most annoying to us; the most hopeless, degraded, vicious and unhappy, and that, therefore—3. We ought, in the exercise of a sound policy for ourselves, and from sympathy with these people, to remove them to Africa, where the causes of their degradation, vice, and misery will not follow them. 4. That we shall, in sending them to Liberia, by their instrumentality in civilizing and christianizing Africa, pay in some measure the debt we owe to that continent for the mighty trespass we have committed upon her.

Here we see a strange mixture of *true* principles, with others that are utterly false. No one will controvert, for a moment, the position that we ought to feel sympathy, aye, even to weeping, with that poor and defenceless class among us, whose degradation and misery originated in the avarice and pride of our ancestors, and have been kept alive by the same active passions in us their descendants. Nor will it be more disputed, when it is remembered, that we have not been the least efficient of the parties in the great confederacy made up of Pagan and Mahomedan, Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Infidel, that has torn from Africa more than FORTY MILLIONS of her sons and daughters, consigning them to hopeless and cruel bondage; so cruel, so hopeless, that there remains not to this day, of that vast number, more than *one fourth*, after taking into the account all their natural increase. I repeat, when this is remembered in all its flagrancy, no one will deny that we owe to that ill-fated people a debt of frightful amount.

But these *true* principles, founded in sympathy with the injured, and in a desire to repay what *justice* demands; tending too, in their fair and unobstructed influence, to the annihilation of slavery, are adulterated, rendered ineffectual, by being mixed up with others that are, in my view, totally false and unsound: viz. that it is a *law of necessity* that the free colored people should forever remain degraded and unhappy whilst they continue among us, and, that it is lawful, right, just, before God and man, *in certain cases, in existing circumstances*, (of which circumstances the wrong-doers are the exclusive judges,) to hold our fellow man as property. So far from this *compound* operating to the extermination of slavery, it is all that the veriest slaveholder in the abstract (if there be such a thing) asks; make to him but this concession, admit but this single ingredient, that, in *present circumstances*, he may hold his *fellow creature as property*, and you may make up the remainder of the mass with whatever ingredients best suit your feelings or your fancy; you may thunder away with

your colonization and gradual emancipation speeches 'until the winds do crack their cheeks,' he feels easy and unconcerned, knowing, that his interests are under convoy of a false principle, powerful in its influence, and overmastering, when running, as it boes here, coincident with habits, and prejudices, and passions.

Let us suppose, for a moment, what would be the probable train of reflections, coursing through the mind of a slaveholder, whose conscience had been somewhat aroused and was on the eve of healthful pulsations, after having heard one of our most ingenious and eloquent colonization speeches: 'Tis true, God has said *he has made of one blood all nations of men*; that he has required of us at all times, *to do justice and love mercy*; and, in the history of the good Samaritan, has taught us that *all men are our neighbors*:—He has enjoined upon us *love to our neighbor as to ourselves*, a love that *worketh no ill to him*, and *whatsoever we would that men should do unto us, we should so do unto them*. It is further true, that God has declared himself the avenger of the poor and the oppressed, and that he has hitherto, inseparably connected with slavery, the corruption and effeminacy of the enslavers; that he has brought upon all nations who have persisted in it, judgments desolating and awful, and given to the oppressed, triumph in the land, that has looked upon their sufferings and degradation. I remember, too, that the Fathers of our country when contending against tyranny, declared in the most solemn manner, that *all men are created equal*, that their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is a truth that has been evolved, not from a complicated train of premises, but that it is '*self-evident*,' and, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to life, and interferes unnecessarily with our pursuit of happiness, it is the right of the oppressed to abolish it.

But what do I now hear, from statesmen, orators, politicians, doctors of law, and doctors of divinity, in fine, from men, whom the whole country delight to honor for their intelligence, patriotism and religion, and who know much more of this delicate subject than I do? With one consent, they say in substance, that we are not under obligation, *now*, to do unto others as we would they should do unto us; or if we are, our slaves whose lot has been ordered by God himself so much below ours, cannot certainly be included in the number to whom this obligation is due; that *all men are not created equal*; in as much as *some* are authorized, nay required, *under existing circumstances*, to withhold from others their liberty, to block up every avenue to their happiness, to abridge their lives by reducing them to slavery, and inflicting upon them all its concomitant enormities. Or if men are *created equal*, education, and the influences under which their character has been formed, have made them *unequal*; therefore. if there be found a large number of our fellow-men reduced to this inequality

ty, sunk into the low grounds of slavery, and suffering its hope-destroying sorrows, they must be there detained 'for the present,' 'as things now are,' until they can be gradually prepared—it may be, after some half dozen generations have gone to their eternal home—for their safe transfer from the suffocating feculence of slavery to the pure and health-giving air of the high-grounds of freedom. And in reference to slavery itself, I hear it said—however hateful, and wicked, and deserving of the execration of every gentleman and christian, it may be, *in the abstract*, however sinful our remote ancestors may have been in suffering it to be *imposed* on them, and the intervening generations in continuing it, yet, in the process by which it has been transmitted down to us, notwithstanding its victims have been multiplied to MILLIONS, and cries, and tears, and curses, have in unbroken mass, ascended, day and night, to God's throne, it has been purified from all its guilt and injustice, and we *now*, instead of rebuke and censure, deserve somewhat, at least, of sympathy and praise for submitting, with so much patience, to the evil of keeping our 'neighbors,' loaded with chains and fetters of interminable bondage.

And am I not further told, that the free colored people of our country are the most degraded and unhappy class of the community; is it not continually asserted, and I begin almost to believe it, that our slaves are in a better condition, more happy, and contented than they? Would it not then be a great departure from the *law of love*, a want of charity to my trusty slave, whose fathers served mine, and who is now faithfully serving me, to release him from bondage, and bestow upon him that freedom which must degrade him from his present comparatively *enviable caste*, and consign him to one in which he and all his posterity must forever remain miserable? Now in all this conflict of old truths, of the truths of God's word, and of our government, with the prevailing and popular commentaries upon them, what shall I do? This I will do—To say the least of it, it is a 'delicate question;' it has *intrinsic difficulties*, therefore I ought to let it alone. My *own* case is a *peculiar* one; I am in circumstances of which no one is qualified, or has (of this I am pretty sure) authority to judge except myself. These may and probably will continue unchanged during my life, and, for aught that appears, they may remain '*present circumstances*,' to my great, great grand children; and thus they, too, may enjoy all the advantages, without the sin of slavery. However, let the sin and danger be what they may in future, posterity will take care of itself; '*providences*' will relieve them; it is no business of mine; so I will let alone the whole matter.'

Now, sir, this is a case only supposed to occur on the presentation of some of the grounds of colonizationists in relation to slavery. But, I doubt not, it is often an actual case, and that

thus slavery as it is in practice\* is justified; the consciences of men are put at ease; the great duty of man to do unto others as he would they should do unto him, and the great truth, that 'all men are created equal,' on which our republican institutions stand, *virtually lived down.*

If to the above considerations in reference to slavery, arising out of the manner in which that subject is treated by colonizationists, there be added the effects of a sentiment of hostility against the free colored people, excited in the whites by a persevering reiteration of the *policy* of removing from among us that class of persons, because they are not only pestilent to us all, but dangerous, by their very presence, to the full repose of the slaveholder, together with the irritated and indignant feelings which such a course is calculated to produce in their minds, the clue is furnished to account for the facts, that under the colonization regimen, slavery, as a system, remains unshaken, and that Liberian emigration, so far as the free colored people are concerned, is almost entirely abandoned.

If any of the conclusions above indicated be true, viz. that the system of slavery in our country remains unshaken, and that we are living down the great *foundation principle* of the government; that a persecuting and malignant spirit has been excited against the free colored people; that the consciences of men, whilst they are perpetrating the greatest wrong that can be perpetrated, this side the grave, against their fellow men, are put at ease, it is greatly to be deplored: and if on impartial examination, the cause of all this be detected in colonization principles; or if it is only *probable*, that it may be detected there, with what alacrity should we abandon a course of action in which a great portion of the *influence* of the nation has been engaged, so injurious to us as a people, and to the great cause of humanity and freedom throughout the world.

\* I would contribute my mite to disabuse the public mind and relieve the discussion of slavery from the influence of the expression "slavery in the abstract." This drug has been powerfully narcotic to the consciences of slaveholders. Many who are very well content with the enormities of slavery IN PRACTICE, have to it IN THE ABSTRACT a hatred that is perfect. Let us try it by analogies, to see whether any result that is not absolutely ridiculous can be obtained. A man acts fraudulently towards you and all his neighbors, yet, from his heart he hates fraud and dishonesty in the abstract!! Another meets you every evening with the wages of your daily labor in your pocket--by threats and force he wrests them from you. Now this man, as much as any other man, detests robbery in the abstract!! More especially, if he has accompanied each instance of violence with as much food as will keep you alive. It would seem to be not more unreasonable to talk of laws, or morals, or astronomy, or chemistry, food, or raiment, or lodging IN THE ABSTRACT, than of slavery IN THE ABSTRACT. If the death blow can be given to slavery in practice, the abstract will scarcely be worth contending about.

In searching for the true cause of the apparent permanency of slavery, anterior to the direct efforts made in the last two or three years to overthrow it, I will not reject as unworthy of consideration, the state of the public mind during the war of 1812-15, when it was looking *abroad* rather than *at home*; nor the condition of the country upon the return of peace; the high prices of southern productions, and the great southern region that had been acquired and was thrown into the market by the government, soon after the war, in the very midst of slaveholders. It is nothing more than just to take these things into the estimate of *cause*, when it is attempted to account for the comparative inertness of the people of the United States on the subject of slavery. But *their* effect was, to occasion only *neglect* of consideration: there was in them no impugning of leading principles, no adulteration of the great truths asserted by our revolutionary fathers, 'at a time that tried men's souls.' Such obstacles as these never could have successfully opposed, for any length of time, the disencumbered principles and intelligence of our countrymen. Nothing could, so long, have withstood their united vigor, unless it had possessed some accident, fitted to draw them away from the contemplation of pure truth to some counterfeit presentment of it—to divert their mental and moral vision from the clear fountain of light, to its false images; which, ever, when they exist, are seen *near* the great luminary in the heavens.

Does it look like *straining* to find the connexion between cause and effect, when our national inertness is ascribed to the principle so diligently inculcated by colonizationists, that slavery, however sinful and wrong it may have been heretofore, and may, possibly, be hereafter—*now, under existing circumstances is neither sinful nor wrong?* To what else can you attribute the alleged melioration of slavery in many parts of the country? which in most instances amounts to nothing more than an excuse, an argument sent forth in the trappings of humanity for its continuance. How else has it happened, that whilst we have, in our declaration of Independence, in our general and state constitutions, continually presented to us the purest principles of liberty, divested of all ambiguity, the most unequivocal affirmations of the rights of man, *as man*, united to the freest practice under them, that is enjoyed on earth; how happens it, I ask, that, whilst the systems of slavery reared for centuries in other countries; in Mexico, in Colombia, Gautemala—in fine, in all the Republics of the South, humbly as we rate them when compared with ourselves; that even West India bondage, inveterated by use and habit, sustained by wealth and title and talent, has by the force of truth been dashed in shivers to the ground, whilst ours looks like a wall of adamant; that, whilst nearly all the civilized nations of the globe have broken the yoke of the slave, we stand,

followed with Brazil, the most contemptible of all despotisms, bawling out to the world 'all men are created equal;' whilst the scourge, dripping with the blood, is brandished by hands besmeared with the gore of nearly three millions of our fellow men? If, sir, there be any cause other than the principles by which colonization is urged, I have not been so fortunate as to discover it.

Will it be contended that slavery, as a system, is not to all appearance, more confirmed among us than it was fifteen or eighteen years ago? Will it be said, that, so far as the *nation* feels on the subject, there has been a change favorable to the enlargement of the slave? Where will the evidence be sought to sustain the affirmation? In the condition of things, as they relate to slavery in the District of Columbia, over which, it is undisputed that Congress possesses powers of legislation as full as those of a state over the territory within its limits? Will it be found in the large and well arranged depots for the reception and confinement of slaves? In the spacious *factories* erected and furnished within the District for the prosecution of the slave trade; throwing into contempt by the extent and regularity of their business, the factories of the busiest traffickers in human flesh on the coast of Africa? Is it to be found in the unblushing advertisements of the slavers, published too in the most respectable Gazettes of Washington and Alexandria, declaring that '*they are in the market,*' that the shambles for men and women and little children, for fathers and mothers, and sisters and brothers, and wives and husbands, *by the hundred*, are opened day and night, in the very purlieus of the Capitol, so near, that the shrieks of sundered friends and relatives may almost penetrate to the chambers of deliberation? Shall we look for the proof in the regular slave trade that is carried on from the District, by sea and by land, to our Southern ports; a trade as regularly and systematically conducted as any that is driven between New York and Liverpool or Havre? Or in the droves of slaves purchased *by members of Congress*, and either conducted by themselves in person, or by proxy to their *quarters*?\* Or, if proof that slavery, as a system, is shaken, cannot be found in any of these sources, shall we resort to Congress itself, the great representative of national sentiment? What do we find here? A becoming deliberation on this great subject; a respectful attention to the scores of petitions praying that slavery in the District, where its power is undisputed, may be abolished? No, Sir, not so. The numerous petitions presented, during the very last session, were referred for burial without hope of resurrection, to the

\* An honorable Senator has been seen, several hundred miles from Washington, convoying a LOT of slaves, purchased during his official attendance in that city, almost to the very doors of the huts intended for their residence.

Committee on the District of Columbia—and the bare incidental introduction of the subject, on the discussion of a bill granting permission to Edward Brooke to bring into the District two slaves, had well nigh set the House of Representatives in flame. The slaveholder, whenever the subject of emancipation within the District, or in any other way, is brought up, however incidental it may be, straightway vociferates to the free States' representatives 'hands off—don't touch this delicate subject—you know nothing about it—it belongs exclusively to us of the South, who know *all* about it—if you persist in meddling with it, the Union will fly to atoms—for we know, as surely as you abolish slavery in the *District*, you will attempt its abolition in the *States*.'

The logical dress of the outcry is this, 'that if Congress choose to exert a power which is altogether uncontroverted, they will, *therefore* exert a power which no one has ever attributed to them, and which they utterly disclaim.' For further illustration—I am indebted to my neighbor \$1000, and refusing to pay, the coercion of the law is brought to his aid. Called upon for my defence to the action, I admit, in the fullest manner, the justice of the claim—yet still plead, that if the court aid my adversary in the recovery of a *just debt*, its aid will, *therefore*, soon be invoked for the recovery of an *unjust debt*. Now, Sir, I ask, can there be any hearty desire in Congress, or in the people whom they represent, for the extermination of slavery, *any where*, when the majority are bullied by such threats, and satisfied with such logic as this? And is there not adequate cause to account for this lack of proper feeling and right opinion on the subject of slavery, to be found in these inculcations annually and eloquently urged in the very capital of our country—'*that slavery now, is not wrong—that emancipation ought not to be encouraged, unless in connection with expatriation and removal to Africa—and that it is an impossible thing for the colored people to remain here free except in a state of hopeless degradation and unhappiness?*' I cannot entertain a doubt, Sir, that you will perceive, and cheerfully admit, that such doctrines, if received by the community, naturally tend to produce the listlessness of which I have been speaking:—whether or not they are Colonization doctrines, I leave to you and my readers to decide.

2. Their appropriate tendency is to excite a malignant and persecuting spirit against the free colored people—and more rigorous enactments against the slaves. If this be the legitimate result, you, I know, will agree with me in saying, there is in it a shameful lack of magnanimity and manhood. For a people whom God has raised from small beginnings to be great and commanding—to whom he has opened his liberal hand, supplying every temporal want that they can feel—upon whom he has bestowed liberty, civil, political, religious; great moral and intel-



lectual power; for such a people to descend from the 'heaven kissing hill' on which they have been placed, to the low and odious task of persecuting a poor, a weak and defenceless class of our population, which we have, so far, done every thing to degrade; nothing to elevate,—to abuse and vilify them, that they may be compelled to '*consent*' to expatriation; and all this, too, under the plea of humanity, philanthropy, religion—Oh, Sir, it is a rank offence before God. *He* gives power, that it may be used for good, not for evil—for the protection of the helpless, not for their destruction—and he has declared, that to visit the widow and the orphan, is evidence of that pure and undefiled religion with which he is well pleased. Nature—the moral constitution of man revolts against oppression of this kind:—For observe, Sir, a knot of sturdy lads imposing upon a puny and decrepid brother,—do not feelings of indignation at such conduct arise in your breast beyond the power of suppression? I feel assured they do, Sir, not only in *yours* but in the breast of every one who is not himself a tyrant. Thus, opposed by the benevolence of God and the moral constitution of man, no such system can, on a great scale, be ultimately successful.

However, to the proof, that this persecuting and rigorous spirit, has been *growing* among us, since colonization principles have been generally received by the community. It is to be found, in the most unequivocal source—the *laws* of nearly all the slave states. Take for specimens a few. I have seen the son of a white woman sold into perpetual slavery by the Commonwealth of Virginia—attempting to regain by legal process in a distant State his long lost liberty.

Has a free colored man, by his industry, secured for himself and those dependent upon him, a permanent place of residence, or do the avails of his economy and exertions lie in real property? Acts of banishment exist compelling him to remove within ninety days. Does he seek employment in distant commerce, or is he but a simple mariner on board a vessel entering the ports of several of the slave states, either for purposes of trade or through stress of weather? He is thrown into prison as a felon, and there detained at the Captain's cost [which eventually must be *his*] until the vessel is ready to depart.

Is he charged with a criminal offence? He is tried—not as formerly, before tribunals that were really competent to decree justice—but by *commissions* made up of men, selected for the most part, without reference to their knowledge of the laws of the state, either civil or criminal.

Does the mind of a slave rise above his low condition—does he thirst for knowledge, its proper food, and above all for that knowledge 'which is life eternal?' His master, should he *teach* him, is subjected to indictment and fine. His fellow-slave, should

he instruct him, or should the free colored person undertake the task, or give or sell him *any* book, he is whipped *or* fined, or whipped *and* fined *at discretion*. Does the intelligent free colored man look with compassion upon his brethren, bond or free—behold their degradation—their ignorance? Does he witness how unpitied they go out of this world—how unprepared to enter upon that which is to come,—does he thence desire, with the zeal of his Master, and as his minister, to declare to them the glad news that a Saviour has died for them, and loves them, and desires them to be eternally happy; to impress upon them the pure and peaceable and comforting truths of his gospel?—should he attempt it in Virginia, he is scourged—so is every free colored person or slave that listens to him.—These, Sir, and other kindred fruits are the results of a *policy* which insists upon the banishment of the free colored people.

3.—The influence of these principles is opposed to emancipation. I am not unaware, that it has been supposed to be adjutory to emancipation; and proof of this is offered in the 800 or 900 slaves that have been transported to Liberia. The fact, that about this number have been emancipated by transportation to Africa is admitted. These are *all* the instances of emancipation, that can be attributed to the influence of colonization principles—for, when they insist that emancipation should never be divorced from deportation, they cannot lay claim to the many thousand who are emancipated in this country, that they may, if they choose, remain here, and who have remained here. It would be an unfair pretension, to ascribe to the influence of certain principles, effects, which they have no natural and inherent tendency to produce. But it is very confidently believed and asserted, that the discussion of colonization throughout our country, has *incidentally*, brought up the subject of slavery to public consideration—and that to this are to be set down the numerous emancipations that have been granted, where the beneficiaries have not been sent out of the country. I grant, it is probable, that in this way, many persons may have been led to see the duty of emancipation, who would not, otherwise, have been conducted to a knowledge of it. But would it not be altogether illogical to ascribe emancipations, *in the country*, to a principle that insisted upon emancipations *out of the country*? Fully as much so, it seems to me, as to ascribe the conversion of a man to the christian religion, to his having heard the ingenious arguments of an *infidel*—when, in truth, it may have been only the occasion upon which his mind discovered, for the first time, the weakness of infidelity, and the strength of the gospel.

But, Sir, during all this time—these 16 or 17 years of gloom to the slave—what has not been lost to the cause of freedom and religion, by the substitution of a cowardly, *incidental* discussion of

slavery, for one which is manly and undisguised. If the sly and incidental presentation of it produce the effects with which it is credited, how much more rich, blessed, and abundant would they have been, had it been pressed openly and directly, yet kindly, upon the hearts and consciences and patriotism of this community! It is to be feared, that we, who have been supporters of colonization, have, thro' ignorance, been instrumental in prolonging, at least through one lifetime, the dark reign of slavery on the earth, and in sending one generation of our fellow men, weeping witnesses of its bitterness, to a comfortless grave!

So thoroughly has been the inoculation of the public with the sentiment, that our slaves, if emancipated, must be removed from the country, that its effects are of surprising uniformity. Address men in this way—'Do you not believe that slavery is *sinful* and in direct opposition to the principles of our government?' the reply—almost without exception—is, 'what shall we do with our slaves, if we manumit them? Where shall we send them? It will never do, in the world, for them to remain among us—it is better to retain them as they are, indefinitely in slavery, than to liberate them here.' This feeling has led to cases of great apparent inhumanity and uncharitableness. One of these has come to my knowledge in so direct a manner, that I have no ground for doubting the truth of it in any particular. A person living in a slave State is the owner of a good looking young man, who is permitted, on his parole of honor, to reside in Cincinnati—to receive the *hire* for his own services from the gentleman in whose employment he is—not, in any part for his own use, but to be transmitted according to his [the slave's] discretion to his owner. He has learned to read and write, and has given, *in his uniform conduct*, the *best* evidence, that he is, in truth, as he professes to be, a *Christian*. He has never, in the least degree, violated his integrity toward his owner, by retaining any of the fruits of his own toil, or by asserting his liberty as he might, at any time, do in Ohio. His friends and connections are all residents of this country. This circumstance, united to a very unfavorable opinion of the present condition and future prospects of Liberia, has made him entirely averse to a removal thither. He has a strong desire to obtain his freedom, and has offered for it a large sum. His offers have been steadily met by a refusal, *at any price*—yet he has been promised his liberty *gratuitously*, if he will 'consent' to emigrate to Liberia. To this he entertains an insurmountable repugnance—preferring to remain in his present condition, although his noble spirit is almost worn down with its hopelessness. Now, Sir, were it not for the prevalent opinion, that the colored man, whatever may be his intellectual or moral elevation—can never be respectable or happy among us, I doubt whether such a case as this, calling for the deepest sympathy, the most earnest

commiseration, could have been found in the private annals of Western slavery. There is no country, in its best state, that would not suffer loss by the banishment of such a man.

4.—They are an opiate to the consciences of many, who would otherwise, in all probability, feel deeply and keenly, the injustice and the sin of slavery. They are the purchase of a little more sleep, a little more slumber. I have friends, dear to me, who would, in integrity, rank with the Camilli, and the Fabricii, and in strength of christian principle, fall but little behind the martyrs of the church,—who have thus been persuaded to lay this flattering unction to their souls, ‘that *under existing circumstances*’ it is right before God, *by system*, to take from the weak and the defenceless the daily proceeds of their labor, save what may be sufficient to support them in a state for the continuance of the extortion. And who does not perceive slavery to be *this*? I am certain many of them will read this,—such, I would ask, in all kindness, if, after having attended the meeting of a Colonization Society, and contributed to its support their ten, twenty, or, it may be, their fifty dollars; or after having heard a highly wrought and eloquent colonization speech, they have not seen in very ‘dim effulgence,’ the noble declaration of our Patriot Fathers—*that all men are created equal*? And heard in distant, and yet more distant peals, the thunder of God’s word against the oppressor of his poor?

5.—Colonization principles have, in a great degree, paralyzed the power of the *truth*, and of the ministry in the South. That the messages of the gospel have comparatively but little influence upon mind, in the exclusively planting sections of the country, where the number of slaves is great, will not be denied by any impartial and considerate observer. This I am not inclined to attribute to any defect in the inherent power of the great truths—as applicable to *Southern* mind—adapted by God so wisely to the internal constitution of man. For there have been, and there are yet, daily overturned by them, sins as besetting and as soul-destroying, as slavery. When I recollect, too, the condition of the Roman Empire, at the time when Paul preached in her voluptuous metropolis, and throughout her scarcely less voluptuous tetrarchies: the aggravated system of slavery that prevailed there—the incontinence—the political corruption—the private vice—and that over all these christianity chanted her mild triumphs, I see no reason for distrusting her efficacy, when fairly tried upon any portion of our countrymen. But, when I further remember, that he was partaker in no vicious custom of the country leading him to perpetrate injustice and to overlook mercy; that whatever impurity might be demanded by social manners, or authorized by municipal institutions, *he kept himself pure*; that, when thrown into the very midnight of Roman pollution,

his *christianity* was seen, emitting a clearer, purer and more quenchless lustre—the secret of his success is fully revealed. Behold, at the present time, a professed follower of Paul and of his Master—blessed, perhaps, with a sound education in letters and science—versed in christian lore—brought up in the land of the *free*; with a mind revolting against slavery and every form of oppression; see him, making his way to the South, ready, with the fervor of a neophyte, to declare the messages of God's love to *all* for whom they were intended;—see him, almost as soon as the introduction to the scene of action is past, beginning his labor of love by utterly neglecting 'to preach the gospel to the poor'—by lamenting the hard lot of *masters*, the *evil* of slavery—complaining of the wickedness of the slaves,—excusing every thing in the slaveholder except acts of cruelty that rouse a neighborhood to astonishment; *next*, marrying a widow, or a ward, or a '*fortune*,' with a retinue of his parishioners for her dowry; *afterward*, talking bravely of the price of cotton, and of *men* to make it; and, *at last*, in desperation, *drumming* into silence his agonizing and wailing conscience, by using the very book of *God's love* to justify *man's oppression*;—seeing all this, the secret of *his* unsuccessfulness is made as clear as noon-day. Slavery has shorn him of his strength, and his hands are as indolent and uncertain in pointing out the way of life—if they point at all—as are the hands of a chronometer to point out the progress of time during the last half hour previously to its running down.

I am altogether unconscious of any feeling which would prompt me to utter an unkind word against ministers of the gospel in the South. There are amongst them, I know, men of the most sterling principle,—who, so far as they are individually concerned, have lived, and are yet living, elevated far above the pestilential influence of slavery. To such, in my apprehension, the most disinterested witnesses—I appeal for testimony in the case; and ask, if the marriages of poor ministers with widows *rich in slaves* have not become so frequent as to take away from them their 'casual' or 'accidental' character,—if they have not brought a deep reproach upon the cause of religion,—and if those gentlemen, who have thus entangled themselves in the meshes of slavery, are not looked upon by the very people to whom they were sent, and who are in the same condemnation as 'blind watchmen, dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down to slumber?' And further, whether those gentlemen, who, on the rare occasions of their preaching, rebuke with all authority the profanation of the Sabbath—the love of money, luxury, profanity, intemperance, &c. &c.—who have been heard to pray with all fervor, for the Poles, the Greeks, and all the down-trodden of *foreign lands*, have been ever heard, in any of their public ministrations, to prefer but one listless prayer for the conversion of

the slaveholder to the doing of justice—his heart to the love of mercy, and that the two millions of his ‘neighbors’ lying in bondage before his eyes, might, by the force of christian principle be enlarged, and the oppressed *among us* go free? And, yet further, are not such slaveholding ministers somewhat warmer in their attachment to colonization, than the majority of other men? Do not they insist upon its capacity for the extermination of slavery, as a reason why they do not themselves act more decisively upon the subject? and do they not, in frequent instances, become angry and indignant at those who attempt to agitate their consciences, by holding up their own duty in reference to slavery *right before them*?\*

But, sir, I am not unaware, that it may be said, I am attaching to colonization, consequences that flow solely from slavery, and that would be what they are, independently of colonization, or if it had never been thought of. I admit in the fullest manner the force of the remark. It contains the very substance of my objection to colonization—which is, that, although not *originating*—colonization has *taken up and sustained* the vital principle of slavery, when it declares that *slavery now is right*. Add to this, that, if it does not, in so many words *justify*—it gives favor to an unscriptural, therefore unreasonable, prejudice against the colored man;—it asserts the impotency of religion itself to efface it—it practically converts this prejudice into the instrument by which he is persecuted, until he ‘consent’ to exile for life, among savage men and in a deadly clime. These principles, jointly or severally, are, in my view, objectionable; and not the less so, because [introduced upon the heel of the Missouri question] they have ever since been wielded by the power of talent, the authority of patriotism, and the venerableness of religion, with an influence that has been pernicious to our own country—that has sat with nightmare pressure upon the cause of emancipation at home, as well as upon the cause of liberal principles throughout the world.

When I assumed an agency for the American Colonization Society, one of the grounds upon which I mainly rested my hopes of success, was the co-operation of ministers of religion and laymen, in their example of immediate emancipation and transmission of their slaves to Liberia. From my earliest recollections of slavery, it seemed to be deplored by the religious, that they could not liberate them to *remain here*, with any reasonable prospect of conferring a benefit upon them. Nearly all the Ecclesiastical bodies in the United States, had passed *Resolutions* favorable to

\* I have heard it stated, and have no reason for doubting the fact—that a member of a Christian church, in the State of Mississippi, was heard to say, that he would be delighted at the opportunity of acting as *Executioner* to a distinguished abolitionist of New York—if I mistake not, a member of the same church.

African colonization, declaring—often, in no very measured terms, the great advantages to be derived by the colored people from a removal to Africa, their proper home—and the facilities afforded by colonization for ridding ourselves of slavery without shock or inconvenience. Whilst, in common with others, I had taken up the opinion, that the slaves of the country, where they were humanely treated, were, as a class, superior in worth to the free colored—I yet saw, that, with one consent, the *latter* were advised to emigrate to Africa—not only on their own account, but for the purpose of christianizing and civilizing that deeply injured continent. *A fortiori*, it seemed to me, that the *slave* should go,—and that now, no one could fail to see—and with delight,—that, after years of lamentation, at last a gateway for *christian emancipation* had, in the providence of God been opened, and a safe and happy home found for the poor slave. But no : and hear the reasons.—

Agent.—‘Why do you not send your slaves to Liberia, my brother?’

Christian Slaveholder.—‘They are not qualified to go.’

A.—‘What! *none* of them?—when you have been advising the free people of color—the *worst*, as you allege, in the whole community, to emigrate.’

C. S.—‘Well, there may be some one or two of them who would do very well in Liberia—but they don’t want to go. I have told them they might go, and they positively refuse.’

A.—‘They do—do they? Come now, brother, be honest, as before God—and tell me what means you have used to persuade them. I suppose, of course, *you* have correct information concerning Liberia, or you would not have advised any one to emigrate thither. Have you, then, told them of the prosperity of the industrious—of the religious privileges—the civil liberty? Have you communicated to them a knowledge of the facts which satisfied *you*, that it was the proper home for the black man—that it was only there where he could be happy and free indeed? Have you used that persuasive influence which your superior intelligence, and a uniformly kind and ingenuous conduct toward him have necessarily given you? or, have you, on the other hand, told him nothing about it? Or, otherwise, that Liberia is in Africa—inhabited by naked savages, and lions and tigers, and all sorts of noxious animals, and venomous and devouring reptiles and serpents—that, it is six or seven thousand miles over the ocean, and that, if he chose, after hearing this, he might go and welcome? [Here a pause.] Now, you say your slaves are unwilling to go; I will test your sincerity—will you permit *me* to present the subject to them, with a promise on your part, that such of them, as choose to emigrate, may have the privilege of doing so?’

C. S.—‘Why, sir, you are for pushing things forward a little too rapidly—there is a time you know for all things, as Solomon says—and great enterprizes move slowly, especially at first. And as for your going among my negroes to beat up for recruits, it would only serve to harass and perplex them—many of them have wives and husbands and children belonging to other plantations, it would make such of them as would not go, uneasy and restless, and most likely create a hubbub among the neighbors—it would be cruel to *separate husband and wife—parents and children*. This, every one would feel.’

A.—‘Then, if I understand you, this whole matter, so far as you are concerned in it, is mere trickery—and all your protestations in favor of emancipation—*if a home could be found for the slaves*—wind, and nothing else.’

C. S.—‘Not quite so fast, Mr. Agent—you know very well, it would not do to send out emigrants too rapidly. Suppose, now, that all the religious people of the South were to send out their slaves *at once*—cannot any one, with half an eye, perceive, that it would break up the colony?’

A.—‘What you say might, in the case you have supposed, be verified—but it is a departure from the question with which we set out. I did not ask the reason why *all* the religious people of the South do not send out their slaves,—but why *you* do not? Whatever might be the result, should all the religious slaveholders send out their slaves at once—your ten, fifteen, or twenty, will not endanger the safety of the colony, especially if they be not sent away empty.’

C. S. ‘The truth is, we cannot make such a great change in our domestic arrangements, as you would require, *all in a moment*. A little while hence, the colony will be better prepared to receive them,—*then* they can be sent. Meantime, they may be somewhat prepared by education for the change from slavery to freedom.’

A. ‘In reply, I must say, if *no one* can do without his slaves, *now*,—and *all* act upon this principle, the colony will scarcely ever be enlarged; for the free people of color have almost ceased to emigrate to it. So, that your objection to the present incapacity of the colony for receiving large accessions, may, by the very course you are pursuing, be always sustainable. But, again—are you really and earnestly engaged in educating *yours* for future emancipation and domiciliation in Liberia—taking off from their daily labor of *twelve, thirteen, or fourteen* hours, some *two or three* to teach them even the *elements* of learning. I fear you are trying to deceive yourself in this matter. And do *you* attempt to instruct them in the religion of the bible, whilst forcibly withholding from them the fruits of their daily toil—whilst you are doing, what scarcely a page of that book leaves uncondemn-



ed, and by which they try your character most closely, because they have the deepest interest here? Has it never occurred to you, how vain and ineffectual is this attempt made by *you*, or any one in your situation? And how great is the absurdity to educate in *bonds* those who are intended to be *free*? Beside all this,—your laws forbid the instruction of slaves, and they are becoming, every year, more rigorous. In all the South there is not, to my knowledge, either day-school or Sunday-school for slaves. You are a law-abiding man, too—you will not violate the law clandestinely; how, then, tell me, are *you* preparing your slaves for this important change?’

C. S. ‘Why, really, Sir, when I come to look the thing right in the face, I cannot affirm that much is doing in this way. But, the long and the short of the whole matter is, we cannot get along in the South without slaves—and would you have us, by removing ourselves, give it up to the undisputed dominion of Belial? Under such circumstances I cannot believe that slavery, mild and mitigated as it ever ought to be, is so very wrong as it might appear *in the abstract*.’

A.—‘It is not difficult to furnish a full answer to this defence. If oppressing the weak, and wresting from them the fruits of their toil be slavery, it must ever be wrong, allowing the word of God to be the test. No device of men—either as individuals or nations;—no surrounding of themselves with circumstances, however peculiar they may be—even as peculiar as those now existing in the South,—can change the nature of truth, render the word of God a nullity, and obliterate the great obligation of man ‘to do unto others as he would they should do unto him.’ And if the South cannot be held, even after the sort in which she now is, under the dominion of the Truth, without a continual trespass against God’s law, it is dread proof that God does not intend to hold it—and that he is giving it up to a strong delusion for its overthrow.—In conclusion, to tolerate slavery, because it is *mild* and *mitigated*, is in complete analogy with a defence of ourselves against the charge of injustice and oppression, by pleading that we are not as iniquitous and tyrannical *as we might be*.’

C. S.—But, as you have mentioned the Bible—there were servants—*slaves*, as I understand it, among God’s own people. Abraham was a slave holder, and the Israelites—if not commanded, were permitted by God, himself, to hold slaves. Now does not this prove, conclusively, that in the mere essence of slavery, in the forced and involuntary subjection of one man to the power and caprice of another, there cannot, *per se*, be any thing sinful or wrong?

A.—‘It is very true, that Abraham had servants—a large number of them. He was a prince, and one not of very small dimensions for those times. His *slaves*—as you will have them to

he—went out with him to battle, and constituted, exclusively, the army with which he routed four kings. Their interests were so closely connected with his, that he had no doubt of their fidelity. Would you and your neighbors take out your slaves, in companies and regiments—*by themselves*—armed cap-a-pie—to resist a strong invading foe, who had inscribed upon his banners ‘liberty to the captive—freedom to the slave?’ Or would not your first apprehension rather be, that they would make common cause with the invader, and raise the fierce shout of the oppressed determined to be free, ‘give me liberty or give me death?’ But if these servants [subjects] of Abraham were—according to your translation,—*slaves*, so were also the courtiers of King Saul, [for they are called ‘servants’] and the faithful little army of four hundred men, who adhered to David through all his persecutions by Saul—part of whom he employed in the delicate agency of negotiating a marriage between himself and the accomplished Abigail. Further, if God saw proper to commute the punishment of death, to which, *for their sins*, he had condemned the Canaanites and some of the neighboring nations, for a mild and gentle slavery—and to appoint the Israelites, in the latter as well as in the former case his executioners,—they [the Israelites] are equally guiltless in both.’

Again—the Israelites were commanded to exterminate the Canaanites,—and they did destroy great numbers of them:—Do men go about nowadays, killing their neighbors, and plead in justification or excuse the carnage of the Canaanites! Or is polygamy contended for, at the present time, because Abraham, Jacob and David were polygamists? Thus, Sir, you perceive that, when applied to cases completely analogical, your reasoning leads to conclusions against which every well ordered mind must revolt. Besides, when we come to examine, a little more closely, the instance cited by you of Canaanitish bondage—it will be found to differ very widely in some of its most important features, from negro-slavery as it is seen in this country. God specially directed the Israelites to hold in gentle servitude, as a merciful commutation of punishment,—nations, or parts of nations, who, *for their iniquities*, had been expressly condemned to utter extermination. To the people of this country he has given no direction to hold their African brethren, [who, so far as we know, are not condemned to destruction] in a bondage so rigorous, so merciless, that, whilst it wastes and destroys the body, it tramples under foot every energy and kills every hope of the soul.—I will not say, that the whole of the above argument, thrown, for convenience, into the form of a dialogue, was presented on any single occasion during my agency in the South-west. But, it does exhibit a fair sample of the reasoning by which christian slaveholders quiet their consciences, and satisfy themselves that sla-

very is right, *in their peculiar circumstances*. How far it indicates the advance of correct sentiments on the subject of slavery among slaveholders—and to what extent their excuses and subterfuges are upheld by colonization principles, *as they are actually addressed to the community*, I shall leave for others to determine.

### *Influence of Colonization on the Free People of Color.*

2.—I now propose, in the second place, to speak of the influence of the spirit of colonization upon the free people of color. It will be admitted, I think, by every one acquainted with its history, that it originated in feelings of kindness toward the colored people, as well as in prospects of future good to the whites. So long ago as 1777, Mr. Jefferson proposed to the legislature of Virginia, that all the offspring of slaves, born after that time, should be free at their birth—brought up at public expense—educated, according to their geniuses, to the arts, sciences, or tillage—and furnished with every convenience for emigration to such a place as might be provided for them. Mr. Jefferson was but a little distance in the rear of the abolitionists of the present day—his scheme embracing an immediate abrogation of slavery, except in reference to the slaves *then in being*; and leaving emigration—as it would seem right it should be—entirely to the future option of the colored man. It did not wring from the weak their ‘consent’ to removal, by presenting the alternative of hopeless slavery on the one hand, and banishment from their native land on the other—but left them free, to choose whether they would remain here as freemen, or migrate, in the same character, to another home that would please them better. This plan, taken in connexion with Mr. Jefferson’s sentiments expressed, elsewhere, on the subject of slavery, leaves no doubt, that the *primordia* of colonization, originated in charitable feelings towards those who were suffering before his eyes; for, whatever may have been Mr. Jefferson’s sentiments on other subjects—wherever human liberty, or national justice was restrained, he was the friend and advocate of all from whom it was withheld—be they *white or red or black*.

Nor will I attribute to the excellent Dr. Finley, in whose mind the whole scheme of colonization first attained its full development, any other sentiments, how much soever they may have been mingled with indefensible error and prejudice—than those of the most charitable kind toward the free colored class, when, in a letter to a friend he says—‘The longer I live to see the wretchedness of men, the more I admire the virtue of those who devise, and with patience labor to execute plans for the relief of the wretched. On this subject, the state of the free blacks has very much occupied my mind. Their number increases greatly

and their wretchedness, too, as appears to me. Every thing connected with their condition, including their color, is against them; nor is there much prospect, that their state can be greatly meliorated whilst they continue among us. Could not the rich and benevolent devise means to form a colony on some part of the coast of Africa, similar to the one at Sierra Leone, which might gradually induce many free blacks to go and settle—devising for them means of getting there, and of protection and support till they were established, &c. &c.?

With Dr. Finley, the object was one of a very simple and un-mixed character; one to which no reasonable objection could be started, and which, I am inclined to think, would, if confined strictly to its proper limits, answer better than the present more extended scheme, for building up a *Christian colony*, and for *civilizing* and *christianizing* Africa. But in it we see no pretension to its being the practicable, the only practicable, plan of relieving our country from slavery.

Dr. Finley, doubtless, intended, by his scheme, the permanent benefit and exaltation of the whole class of free colored people. If, so, he was led into the error into which, I think he fell, by contemplating, with great intensity of feeling, nothing but the down-trodden state of that people among us—throwing altogether out of the range of his vision the causes which produced it, and forgetting the energy of those great principles, asserted first by this nation, and even yet received by a great majority of it as *undeniable and self-evident*, and which might still be plucked from their drowning state, for its fuller melioration and correction *here*. He supposed, it was easier to remove from the country those who were the subjects of this degradation, than to successfully combat and overthrow the prejudices and false principles which produced it. He fell into a similar mistake with those, who think, that slavery can be exterminated, by transporting to another country, such of the slaves as may be liberated among us, without having first given the death-blow to slavery, *itself the producing principle*,—and forgetting, that the few who would be emancipated, under such circumstances, would be only the *superfluity* occasioned by the generative power of the principle, and their abstraction but lopping off the dead and unsightly branches of the *Upas*, and giving to it more comeliness and vigor.

Had he been in Turkey, and seen some thousands of christians in the same condition as that occupied by the free colored people in the United States, rearing their families under all the oppressions of that government as they are exercised upon those who are even nominally christians, it would have been an act of benevolence, to persuade them to remove—albeit, to a wild and unsettled coast,—and, of still greater benevolence, to have pro-

vided the means for their transportation. Why? because, neither the *government* of Turkey, nor the *moral structure of Turkish society* contains in it any principle acknowledged by all to be 'undeniable,' 'self-evident,'—which could be held up and urged and traced in its consequences, before the people and those in power, of sufficient efficacy to condemn their practice. They are, both, constituted upon the principle, that it is *right* to persecute a 'christian dog'—to kick him, spit upon, deny him all legal privileges, and if he give any, the slightest provocation, to *bowstring* him. Under such circumstances—where neither the *Government* nor *public sentiment* acknowledge any principle sanitary and corrective of oppression,—efforts tending to any other object than the removal of the oppressed from the scene of their sufferings, would justly be deemed enthusiastic and absurd.

But how widely different is the case here! Does the advocate of slavery assert, that it is *right* to oppress a fellow-creature, because *God* has given him a complexion unlike what he has bestowed upon us?—to subject him to all the *weight* of the law, whilst there is wrested from him all its *power* for his protection? Does the slaveholder say, it is *right* that slavery, with all its soul-killing enormities, as well as with its lesser evils, should be continued? To meet this, with what powerful armor has God clothed the American patriot and christian! Shall he consent to extinguish slavery, by removing its *redundancy*?—a process that may be carried on for a hundred years, and, then, leave our 'last state worse than the first.' Or to compass sea and land, that he may find some hole or corner for the thrusting away of the free colored man, sad, sick at heart, by reason of oppression?—that the slaveholder may repose in all the voluptuousness of the most undisturbed quiet? Or shall he not rather raise the slaveholder's earth-directed vision to the clear arch of the sky, and bid him there read words that are eternal in the Heavens, '*whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them,*' with its noble commentary '*all men are created equal, and have rights that are inalienable, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?*' Shall he not rely upon the salutary operation of great principles sanctioned by God, and declared by man to be '*undeniable*;' that are of sufficient efficacy, wherever they are ably and honestly urged, for the reformation of every unjust and pernicious usage in the land—rather than upon some poor shift, some conscience-calming expedient for the present exigency, whilst future exigencies—going into eternity, it may be—to which it is totally inadequate, are left entirely unprovided for.

The error of Dr. Finley, and of those who thought with him, is to be found in their attempt to convey away the bitter waters, whilst they left in full flow the fountain that was continually renewing them;—in their essaying to remove the free colored

people from the influence of a false and destructive principle, whilst the principle itself was still permitted to exist, vigorously producing and reproducing its baleful effects—instead of meeting it at its very origin and stopping it there. The *wrong practice* of oppression—the unjust denial to the free colored class of the charitable conduct of a refined and christian people, should have been boldly met by the *right principles* of men's equality, and their duty to each other as social beings.

But it was not long before the benevolent object of Dr. Finley was greatly perverted, and the benefit that was intended for the free colored man—his chief aim was made secondary to the *policy* of sending him away.\* At first, the apparent benevolence of the enterprise moved the spirits of some of the free people of color, and not a few of them were preparing, doubtless, as true heralds of the cross, to bless benighted Africa. Emigrants offered themselves in greater numbers than the means of the Society were competent to send out. Seeing this, the *philanthropy* of the enterprising was thrown somewhat in the back-ground, or became, with many, merely auxiliary to the *policy* of sending out of the country the whole of the free colored population. In this way, it was recommended to the most determined slaveholder. He was reminded, that the free colored man was a 'nuisance' to the white—a source, almost the only one, of disquiet and discontent to the slave,—that he was boundlessly degraded and vicious, polluted and polluting all around him,—and, that the fact of his

\* I am here reminded of the very great resemblance this case bears, in its most prominent features, to that of the Indians, who have been moved upon, in nearly the same manner, to "consent" to leave their lands within the limits of several of the states. To these unhappy people—unhappy because cruelly treated by those upon whom they, as children, cast themselves for protection—it was urged, that the encroachments and lawlessness of the whites would render their situation, whilst they remained near them, too grievous to be borne—that, they would be far happier when separated from us, in a country entirely under their own control—and, in conclusion, that this advice was dictated *by humanity—by a pure regard for their welfare*. What was the Indian's reply? "'Tis true, our situation, owing to the causes you have mentioned, is bad enough, but is it not made so by your negligence of right, and disregard of the most solemn stipulations? Will you, by your injustice—your fraud—your force, *create* the necessity which makes it expedient for us to remove to a wilderness, and then, by persuading us to fly from its destructive influence, claim the praises of philanthropy and humanity? Strange reasoning this!—since it leads to the conclusion, that the greater your friends, the louder will be the plaudits you will gather for *good will* to the poor Indian. Where are your treaties, by which you are bound solemnly before God and the world to conduct yourselves towards us, at least, with *justice*? Go, tell your countrymen to restrain their avarice, withhold their force, repress their injustice—purify and elevate their morals, and not approach us with the disgusting skeleton of *policy* decked out with the tawdry vestments of *humanity*. Away with your humanity that is based on selfishness, we'll none of it."

being so, might always remain as strong as it *then* was for sustaining such an *argument*, it was asserted with ceaseless repetition, that in this degraded state he must continue as long as he resided among us—that *here* his condition was irretrievable, hopeless; in fine, it was an 'ordination of Providence.' All this was surmounted by *pxans* to our humanity. And the free colored man, for *his* encouragement was told, that the whole field of honorable ambition lay open before him; that he might, in the land of his fathers, engage in the high offices of legislation—in the solemn ministrations of the altar—and in laying the foundations of a great people, a mighty christian nation, before whose feet the countless idolatries of Africa's unnumbered tribes would fall in ruins to the ground.

All this sounds well,—but it will be found, on examination, to contain principles at variance with each other and mutually destructive. Let us suppose these motives to be addressed to an intelligent free man of color, would not his train of reflections, most probably, be somewhat of this kind? 'I belong, then, to a class, which the white man declares to be a *nuisance*. If this be true, what has produced it? His own conduct. What has this been, but a course of systematic neglect, contempt, abuse—withholding from us every franchise and immunity of the government whose tendency, he says, is to elevate and ennoble those who exercise them? We were thrown out from the charnel-house of slavery, ignorant, unconscious of the want, unable to appreciate the advantages of education—our families cut off from all associates, except the degraded slave, or the polluted and polluting white:—and what has been done for us? Whilst the white man has established, at great expense of life and treasure, schools for the Caffre and the Hottentots—for the Indian of Ceylon and the negro of New-Zealand; whilst he has his missionary, on the one hand, plying with untiring step his course to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and, on the other, scaling the wall of China to declare that Truth which makes men 'free indeed'— what has he done, what is he doing, for the *class*, whose ignorance and error must be daily witnessed, and whose wants must be fully known? Nothing, nothing, nothing. What confidence, then, can I properly repose in a benevolence acting only *afar off*, whilst it neglects so much *at hand*—in that charity which will despatch a band of missionaries to *Africa*, whilst it will not supply one to her sons *here*, though fainting—perishing for the bread of life? In what manner am I to estimate the sincerity of men—aye, of *christian* men too—who, in one breath, tell me; their prejudices against us whilst *here*, are insurmountable, but, that they vanish, when we are removed from them some six or seven thousand miles—that whilst we remain *here*, *religion* itself is incompetent to destroy them,—but that when it acts across an ocean it pos-

esses wondrous, overmastering potency, for their extirpation, who say, that *here*, under the restraints of wholesome laws, with the presence of the whites to check and control us, we are utterly unfit, because of our moral and intellectual depravity, for the enjoyment of the lowest privilege—yet, forsooth, would fling us, with all our stupidity, our inexperience, our vileness and infamy, in one unbroken and reeking mass, upon a distant land,—unchecked by wholesome laws or animated by virtuous example—to do what? To carry on a system of piracy?—of robbery?—or to establish a *factory* for conducting a commerce in the blood and gore and groans of our fellow-men? No: it is not in these occupations we are to be employed, and for which it would seem, *our benefactors being witnesses*, we are well fitted, but it is—O, wonderful adaptation! to christianize and civilize one hundred millions of heathen!!

Again—if we are a nuisance *now*, by what necessity are we always to remain so? Are we incapable of improvement—impenetrable to those great truths by which man's mind is enlightened—his heart purified and he made a *freeman indeed*? This cannot be asserted without impugning God's word. What, then, will make up this everlasting pressure? *Prejudice, prejudice*—so proclaimed 'before all Israel, and before the Sun!' We have none against the whites. Deeply injured, neglected, vilified as we have been, we are willing to pass it all by, take a lowly station, and cheerfully acknowledge their superiority. But how is this temper reciprocated? By still accumulating abuse. They say of us, as a class, we are diseased, sick, ready to die, and yet, by emigration to Liberia, would they suck from us the most healthful blood that circulates in our system. They declare by their *language*—by their *laws*, an inflexible purpose to grant no mitigation of our ills, unless we respond harmoniously to their *policy* in sending us away. How then can we in a matter so important to us—so far from our homes—so irremediable, if it fail, trust to those whose rigor of temper no concession can soften—whose selfish *policy* is the *substance, our good* but the *accident*?

But further, why are we spoken of as *a class*? why do they throw together the good, the bad, the indifferent, and make of them one mass, baptized by the name of *nuisance*, when they deal not thus with other men? I do not perceive that men of black hair and of light colored hair—of black eyes and blue eyes—of low stature and high stature, are spoken of in *classes*, to which any moral or intellectual designation is given. No: each one is judged by his own merits—nor are they mixed up with the vices and demerits of others to make a foul and unsightly lump. This common-sense and common-charity measure of judgment and treatment is all that I have a right to ask, it is all I desire, and *justice* cannot withhold it.



But, more than all, we are especially obnoxious to the slaveholder. Here is the spring of all this preparation. My fellow-man is in bondage—the sight of a freeman of his own color released from chains will make the slave more restless under *his*; and the slaveholder, with his hand on the throat of my father, my brother, my sister or my mother, must by all means, be kept tranquil and undisturbed—his property in man must be untouched, whilst *he* is robbing him of the use of the limbs and muscles that God gave, and of the daily products of their toil. And this is the sum and substance of this mighty charity! We are to be driven from the country as a *nuisance*—we are to be persuaded, by unceasing reiteration, that such we are *now*, and so we must remain, *to all*,—but especially to the unrelenting slaveholder.' 'O! my soul come not thou into their secret—unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.'

I will not undertake to decide upon the justness of all these reflections. I only say, they are such as may very naturally be expected to arise in the mind of an intelligent free colored person, on the presentation of colonizing motives for removal. That they are, however, nearly allied to such as are really entertained by him, we may be led to presume, from the result of colonizing efforts upon the class to which he belongs. In the commencement of the scheme,—whilst it was recommended chiefly as one of benevolence to the colored freeman and native African, it engaged in some small degree, the attention of the colored people in the northern states. But so soon as it was urged as a stroke of *policy*,—and as such, (accompanied with great vilification of the colored people,) pressed upon the Southern slaveholder, the whole plan was broken up, so far as they were concerned. Benevolent persons, too, among the *whites*, entertaining sentiments of kindness toward the blacks; many of whom had supported colonization on the ground that it bid fair to confer upon them great benefits, so soon as they discovered, that benevolence to the oppressed was *practically*, but the banner on the outer wall, whilst the great citadel of the plan was in the *policy* of removing from amongst us a neglected class of men, whom we had branded, '*nuisance*,' and who were viewed as a hindrance to the peaceful perpetuation of slavery, they not only revolted from it, but so easy a task did they find it, to expose the repugnancy of the principles upon which it was conducted, that they were enabled, very soon, to produce an opinion concurrent with their own, amongst all the colored population of the North.

The free colored people of the South, and of the South-west, more particularly of the latter, have, at no time, manifested much interest in the enterprise. In Cincinnati, there is, among this class, an utter hostility to Liberian Emigration. Their temper on the subject of removal, at all, was, doubtless, greatly exacerbated,

by the severe and persecuting spirit, exhibited toward them in 1828—when a strong measure was resorted to with the view of *compelling* them to remove.

In Louisville, notwithstanding the presence of about one hundred emigrants, who were detained there, for several days, previously to descending the river to take passage in the Ajax—and a very forcible appeal, made at the same time by a highly gifted agent, in behalf of colonization, no effect seems to have been produced upon the free colored people of that city. Not one of them, so far as I am informed, has, at any time, emigrated to Liberia, or signified a wish to do so.

In New-Orleans, among the same class, if not opposition, there is, I apprehend, a thorough indifference. Here, they cannot be much short of ten thousand. Numbers of them know how to read and write, and there are not wanting, those who are educated, intelligent and wealthy. Whilst presenting the claims of colonization to a very large assembly, that part of the gallery, appropriated for Sabbath services, to the blacks, was crowded with that description of people. I spoke of them as I felt—kindly: and of their condition, compassionately. To me it appeared a matter of no small importance to the cause of colonization that some emigrants should, if possible, be obtained out of so large and influential a body as was constituted by the free colored class in New-Orleans. Still more important did I consider it, that some one or two, of the most intelligent and worthy among them, should be persuaded to go out to Liberia, that they might bring back a true report of the condition and prospects of the colony, which I *then* thought would be satisfactory to every one else, as well as to their brethren in the lower country. With this view, through the medium of the newspapers, I gave notice to such of them as desired to go out, that their passage, with all necessary accommodations, would be furnished gratuitously. So little interest was excited in favor of the scheme then, and within the two or three weeks, during which the whole of the emigrants by the Ajax were delayed there, that only one free colored person came to converse with me on the subject. He was irresolute at the first interview, and he never sought another.

A reference to recent expeditions will satisfy any one who will make it, that the free colored people have almost entirely abandoned the project. The whole number of emigrants sent out in twenty-three expeditions was 2,061. Of these, there were slaves, 613. Compare the proportion of these numbers with that shown by subsequent expeditions—say by the four of the year 1833. The first [brig American] from Philadelphia, said to have been a small one, (the exact number I have not by me the means of ascertaining) sailed in May. The emigrants in this instance I set down as *all free*.

The Jupiter sailed from Norfolk with *fifty* emigrants, *forty-four* of whom were slaves. The Ajax from New Orleans with *one hundred and fifty*, of whom at least *one hundred and twenty* were slaves. The Argus from Norfolk with *fifty-one, thirty-five* of whom were slaves. The aggregate number by these expeditions may be fairly set down at *two hundred and sixty*, of whom *two hundred were slaves*.

Such facts, sir, tend to demonstrate the practical operation of the principles on which colonization is recommended. How much soever they may be cherished by the sincere advocate of human liberty, in common with the slaveholder, it is in progress to full proof, that they have in them nothing attractive to that particular class of people for whose benefit the whole plan was set on foot, and as to whom it may be considered as wholly inefficient.—To what extent the transportation of *slaves*, who are compelled to choose between exile and perpetual bondage, is a departure from the original purpose of colonization, I do not purpose here to inquire—but proceed,

3. To speak upon the

### *Influence of Colonization on Africa.*

It is not my intention to discuss this part of the subject at great length, but to prove, as briefly as I can from facts, that the prospect of converting to Christianity and civilizing the heathen of Africa, by the direct instrumentality of the colony, is—if not wholly—in a great measure delusive. To the many who are led mainly by the consideration just mentioned, I trust it will not appear unfriendly to the cause of religion itself, when I attempt to show that their efforts *in this way* have little if any tendency to promote it. As no cause that is substantially a good one ever received solid support from an erroneous presentation of facts, or from false or unsound arguments, so neither will it elude detriment by the suppression of opposing facts, or of a candid and manly examination of its claims. It is for the advancement of *truth*, that I propose to examine the soundness of the position taken by colonizationists, that *the colony will be the great means of Christianizing and civilizing Africa*. In one sense this is not denied: That the colony will continue to grow in numbers and importance, until it may be considered as permanently established; that it will furnish a footing for missionaries and others, who may engage in this work of benevolence: that *here* in future times, as in many of our cities now, the religious will assemble to consult and organize associations for diffusing a knowledge of Christianity among the heathen, I shall not for a moment controvert. What I mean is, that the colony itself, as such—so far from aiding, by the fair influence of its religious character, in the

conversion of the natives who come within the sphere of its action, will rather operate against their conversion. This position will, as I think, be fully supported, not only by the history of all other *nominally* Christian colonies in modern times, but by facts already existing and ascertained, going to prove the unfavorable influence of the colony upon the surrounding tribes.

The discovery of America was made by a man professedly and no doubt really a Christian. The country of his birth, and that under whose patronage his voyages were conducted, especially the latter, were eminently refined, brave and chivalrous. The colonies planted by Columbus were made up of men who were nominally *Christians*, and enterprising, nor is it disputed that there were among them individuals of decided and deep-toned piety. More than this cannot be said of the adventurers to Liberia.—And as for the *natives*, have any ever been found so well characterised to win the regards and conciliate the love of men, as those described by Columbus in a letter to the King and Queen of Spain, as “so affectionate, so tractable, and so peaceable, that I swear to your Highnesses, there is not a better race of men nor a better country in the world—they love their neighbors as themselves—their conversation is the sweetest and mildest in the world, and always accompanied with a smile?” Can the imagination bring up before us circumstances more favorable than those which were here realized by the colonists, for the exhibition of the Christian character? And where, after an experiment of 300 years, are all these people? Civilized?—Christianized? Of the *South Americans*, there are miserable, abject remnants; of the *Islanders*, there is scarcely a human being left, to testify to the *Christian* efforts of this *Christian* colony.

Are we sending to Liberia better men—more regardful of justice and mercy—or more strongly animated by the Christian spirit, than the pilgrim fathers of New England? Yet, where are the aborigines of that country? Are *they* Christianized? No: the scorching spirit of colonial Christianity has utterly consumed them.

In his intercourse with the aborigines of this country, William Penn, more fully than any other of the colonial proprietaries, exhibited to their contemplation the lovely portrait of the Christian negotiator, moving high above the gross region of subtlety and deceit. Notwithstanding this great and attractive example of justice and magnanimity, yet do we find in the history of the aborigines of Pennsylvania, the same result as in all the other colonies—they were either destroyed, or in wretched remnants, driven back farther and farther into the wilderness. The great majority of the colony possessed but little of the spirit of Penn. Nor, indeed, is it to be expected, that adventurers to distant countries, merely *for the sake of gain*, (and of this description the

great body of colonists will always be,) where it is to be acquired by commerce with savages, ignorant and unable to appreciate the value of their commodities, will fail—forgetful of principle and right—generally to seek those advantages in their traffic that superior intelligence can so easily secure to them—especially in the absence of a well regulated public sentiment, as in older countries, to brand such over-reaching with disgrace. Now, sir, if all these instances of colonization in modern times, undertaken under the most favorable circumstances, and by some of the most pious and distinguished men, have utterly miscarried in the work of Christianizing and civilizing the heathen, what can be urged to encourage the expectation that the colony of Liberia, or any other nominally Christian colony, planted on the coast of Africa, will be permanently beneficial to the aborigines of that continent ?

But I am encountered here with an exception to the theory established by these facts :—The European colonists differed in color from the natives of countries where they established themselves ; whereas the negro colonist of this country goes to Africa with all the advantages of similar color and physical conformation. I grant, that this circumstance did at one time appear to me entitled to considerable weight ; but the testimony of Governor Pinney, united to other testimony of the same character, showing the relation of the colonists and the natives, has very much diminished its weight, and furnished, agreeably to my apprehension, reasons for believing there are causes as completely repulsive between the native African and the colonist from the United States, as any that can be found in *color* or *form*. This gentleman, writing from Monrovia, in February last, says—“ The natives are, as to wealth and intellectual cultivation, related to the colonists, as the negro of America is to the white man, and this fact, added to their mode of dress, which consists of nothing usually but a handkerchief around the loins, leads to the same distinction as exists in America between colors. A colonist of any dye, [and many of them there are of a darker hue than the Vey or Dey, or Kroo or Bassa] would, if at all respectable, think himself degraded by marrying a native. The natives are, in fact, menials, (I mean those in town) and sorry am I to be obliged to say, that from my limited observation, it is evident, that as little effort is made by the colonists to elevate them as is usually made by the higher class in the United States to elevate the lower.’

The Rev. Samuel Jones, a colored man, and a Baptist preacher, sent out by the Colonization Society of Georgetown, Ohio, on a visit of exploration to Liberia, speaking on the same subject, says—“ I saw in all the schools but one or two *natives*—and none were present the two Sabbaths I preached in the colony. The natives generally fear the colonists, and they (the colonists) say it is necessary that they should, that they may not

rise and destroy them. One man, a licensed exhorter of the Baptist denomination, went so far as to say the natives ought to be slaves, and he debated the subject with me quite warmly. In fact, the relation between the colonist and native is very similar to that between master and slave." "All the colonists who can afford it, have a native or two to do their work. The natives never go into the house, but always eat and sleep in the kitchen. When they go to the door to speak to the masters, they always take their hats off, as though they desired to be very submissive."\*

The Commercial Advertiser of New York, a newspaper warmly supporting the cause of colonization, on the arrival of the schooner Edgar a few days since from Liberia, says ; "All the information we have from the colony, represents the pride, luxury and extravagance of those settlers who have been prosperous in trade there, as highly reprehensible. Almost every family has a number of natives employed as native servants, and even among the families of emancipated slaves who have been sent there, though themselves entirely dependent for their support, yet they are too lazy even to bring water; and declare themselves free, and *employ natives as their servants.*"

The Rev. Mr. King of Tennessee, late agent of the Tennessee Colonization Society, who went out in the Ajax, in company with Mr. Jones mentioned above—told me, not long since, that the colony had produced so little effect upon the *costume* of the natives, that they were yet to be seen wandering and lounging in the street, in the state of almost nudity, described by Mr. Pinney.

The same gentleman whilst in Liberia, became acquainted with the Reverend Mr. Cæsar, an Episcopal clergyman, much respected. By him he was told, that although the last war

\* The constitution of the colony prohibits involuntary slavery—except for crime ; yet, what kind of a barrier does a paper prohibition oppose to a vitiated state of public sentiment ? Is it not a matter that should be deeply pondered by Christian slaveholders in our own country, how far their example may contribute to bring about and sanction the enslavement of the natives by the colonists ? Is it not probable that the edge of detestation of slavery would be somewhat dulled among them on their recollecting that their friends in the United States, looked upon by them, it may be, as eminent preachers and Christians, still hold their fellow men in bondage ? How many plausible pretexts might be found for turning into a cotton, or coffee, or sugar plantation, some half a dozen or more of these nearly naked nomadic ladies and gentlemen, that they might be better fed and clothed than they could clothe and feed themselves—and have the additional benefit of now and then hearing the gospel preached, to the salvation of their souls ! How easily might they fill their mouths with arguments that were formerly deemed good for the African slave trade, and *now* for the domestic slave trade, and for the continuance of slavery among us ?

(March, 1832) with the natives, in which there were many of them killed, was popular, and considered *glorious* for the colony, yet the *ostensible* cause of it was not the real cause;—and that the latter was to be found in the resentment of a keen and active trader by the name of 'Thompson, originating in disappointment at not receiving a due reciprocation of *presents* made by him with the purpose of advancing his traffick with the natives.\*

But, Sir, has it ever been known, that *Commercial* establishments have proved to be sources of religious knowledge and improvement to the heathen, among whom they have been placed? The colony of Liberia is emphatically one of this character—there exists in it, according to all accounts, a rage for trade. Let us recur for a moment to the history of religious efforts among our neighboring Indians. Who, amongst us, would ever think of encouraging a *trading station*, or *company of petty shop-keepers*, (such as could be induced to emigrate for *gain*) and upholding them, as the best means of diffusing a knowledge of Christianity among the Indians, as *missionary stations*!! I will venture to say, that among the greatest obstacles the *true missionary* has to encounter in recommending "Christ" to our aboriginal natives, is the influence, direct and indirect, of such establishments. When we consider *their object*, we cannot be at a loss, for an instant, to arrive at this conclusion. It is to *supply the wants of savage life, but more especially the PECULIAR wants of savage life.*

These peculiar wants are trinkets, baubles, beads, tobacco, ardent spirits, fire-arms, powder and ball. It is the gratification of these wants that gives vitality, and their growth that gives encouragement to the trading stations. Now, so long as these peculiar wants subsist, *savageism* must continue—so long as they grow, it must also be growing more rude and untameable. So superficial is this truth, that no missionary station, so far as I am informed, has ever been supplied with any of the articles mentioned above, calculated to keep alive savage customs. What is the first work of the missionary? Is it not to allure to peace, to *stationary* life and habits of settled industry? If he succeed, he puts an end, in proportion to his success, to the sale of arms, powder and ball, whether they be intended to kill men, or for hunting. If he inculcate abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, he is brought directly in collision with the *interest* of the trader. Should he be blessed in his honest labors for the amelioration of savage life,

\* If this be the true account, there was, in the result, a singular retribution of Providence.—*Thompson was the only colonist who was killed in the battle with the natives.*

it must be almost entirely, by the annihilation of the trader's occupation. It would seem strange then, that with experienced persons, there should, after twelve years disastrous trial, too, at Liberia, exist such pertinacity in insisting upon the practicability of uniting the *trader and missionary*—and, that there should still be indulged such bloated expectations of good to the heathen of Africa, from the instrumentality of men who go out [if *preachers*, so much the worse] with fire-arms, powder and ball, and rum, in one hand, and the Bible in the other.

The wants of the native African are limited to a little cotton cloth, trinkets, beads, baubles, tobacco, ardent spirit, powder, ball and fire-arms. Francis Devany, who became a resident of the colony in 1823, testified before a committee of Congress in 1830, that he had acquired property since his emigration to the amount of \$20,000—and that a Mr. Waring, (if we mistake not, a preacher,) had, as a commission merchant in Monrovia, sold in one year, goods to the amount of \$70,000. Now, Sir, even upon the supposition that no other goods were sold to the natives, than the probable yearly amount vended by these two gentlemen, what awful havoc must have been made of the souls and bodies of these poor savages ! And when we consider, too, that in this “dreadful trade” are engaged professed ministers of Jesus Christ, who from their sacred calling must, of course, be most relied upon for preaching the gospel to them, and exhibiting, in their own conduct, the beauty of the Christian character, it becomes a question of tremendous import to all American Christians. “Can I, in conscience, give my support and encouragement to an establishment, whose ways are *present* destruction to the heathen, in the hope that peradventure, it may become *hereafter* the means of blessing and salvation to them ?”

But the pernicious consequences of such a state of things, are by no means confined to the natives. The “Commercial Advertiser,” tells us that “those who have been most prosperous in trade” (in supplying the country with the instruments of death) “are proud, extravagant and luxurious.” They have reaped their reward, it may be, at the expense of the little pittances of the unwary emigrants, who by their rum and alluring trumpery, have been *made and kept* poor. As to the condition of the poor, however they may have become so, another quotation from Mr. Jones' journal shall inform us. “On the fourth day, Mr. King [Agent of the Tennessee Colonization Society] suggested that we ought now to visit the *poor*. We accordingly did so—and of all misery and poverty, and all repining that my imagination had ever conceived, it had never reached what my eyes now saw, and my



ears heard. Hundreds of poor creatures, squalid, ragged, hungry, without employment—some actually starving to death, and all praying most fervently that they might get home to America once more. Even the emancipated slave craved the boon of returning again to bondage, that he might once more have the pains of hunger satisfied. There are hundreds there who say they would rather come back and be slaves than stay in Liberia. They would sit down and tell us their tale of suffering and of sorrow, with such a dejected and woe-begone aspect, that it would almost break our hearts. They would weep as they would talk of their sorrows here, and their joys in America—and we mingled our tears freely with theirs. This part of the population included, as near as we could judge, *two thirds* of the inhabitants of Monrovia.”

Mr. Jones had been a slave in Kentucky;—in a subsequent part of his journal he says, “Sooner than carry my wife and two sons there to settle, with only what property I now possess, I would go back into slavery as a far better lot.”\*

\* There are among us, I know, many men of distinguished piety and talents—especially in the free states—who have long since lost all confidence in colonization, as an effectual means of exterminating slavery, or even in its persuasive influence over the free colored people to remove themselves to Africa—who yet adhere to it as a *missionary enterprise*. Such, I entreat to consider attentively, impartially—with prayer—the view, imperfect as it may be, that I have attempted to give of this part of the subject. In the same spirit let them ask themselves—“Is the direction of this matter decidedly of a religious character?”—“Has the action of the colony upon the natives heretofore been such as God uses to bless in the conversion of the heathen?”—“Is there any reasonable ground to believe that it will be such in future?”—“Is there not some room to fear that many of the colonists who have left this country with a highly reputable religious character, have fallen back to a baser standard?” If an affirmative answer to the three first questions should barely preponderate, and there is hope of things still better to come, ought it not to be a matter of the most earnest consideration, how far even this will justify men of deep-toned piety, whose praise is in all the churches, and whose intellectual labors reach the remotest frontier hamlets—in sustaining, by their names and their efforts, a scheme that puts at ease the conscience of the slaveholder—that has a tendency, so far as it succeeds, by removing the greatest impediment to the peaceful enjoyment of slave property, to perpetuate the system of slavery—a system, that is breaking up the schools and colleges of the South—dissolving its churches, impoverishing the country: giving, with each day of its protracted existence, additional strength to every excuse that is now made for its continuance, and that must in a few years at most, if left undisturbed, break up the South with overwhelming destruction? As long as such gentlemen, approving, doubtless most honestly, this supposed feature in colonization—step forward, and for this cause publicly recommend the whole scheme—they are, with triumph, whatever they may intend, set down by the determined slaveholder of the South as full-blooded colonizationists endorsing his opinions, that slavery now, under existing circumstances, is right—that emancipation in the country is out of the

Is it not very probable, that those persons who have looked, with high expectations, to the scheme of colonization, as the best that could be devised for the annihilation of the African slave trade, are doomed to suffer utter disappointment? This trade has been carried on since the establishment of the colonies at Sierra Leone and Liberia, as vigorously as it ever had been driven at any former period; and notwithstanding, it is regarded by the laws of the States of Europe, as well as of our own country, *piracy*, and is punishable with death, and many of the public ships of these powers, particularly of England, are continually cruising in the African seas, in quest of slavers, yet, Sir, is this traffic in human flesh carried on throughout the whole coast, and to no contemptible extent, *even in their own colony established for its suppression*. This fact was fully disclosed, by an inquiry instituted not long since in the British Parliament. Nor am I, by any means, sure that the result of the same inquiry does not, on very strong grounds, implicate some of our own colonists of either directly participating in the trade, or else conniving at its existence in the neighborhood of Monrovia. May we not be prepared to expect this, from the evidence already before the public of the entire deterioration of the Christian character, in such of the colonists as have been most successful in trade, and their utter neglect thus far, of the natives? If men professing Christianity will, at this day, consent to enrich themselves by the sale of such vast quantities of ardent spirits as have been sold to the natives by church-members in Liberia, their *next* movement will be to sell to the *slaver* his supplies;—suspecting him to be such, yet asking no questions, for who questions a customer with a full purse? The *next* step will be to assume a secret agency for him; the *next*, a direct participation in the profits connected with the agency; and lastly, when such men by their wealth and influence have moulded public opinion to sustain their views, and the colony is left to its OWN government; there will, in all probability, be a shameless and open prosecution of the trade in their fellow beings.\*

question; that rigorous laws, made to wring from the free colored people their "consent" to emigrate, are not to be condemned, but rather to be winked at. The great mass of men stop not to inquire what nice shades of difference there may be among colonizationists, but who are colonizationists by public profession. This ascertained, they are set down as favoring all its gloomy consequences; as the advocate of all its appalling influence; as certainly as the moderate drinkers of their one or two daily glasses of brandy each, are written down by the opposers of temperance, on their side.

\* John Dean Lake, a witness in the inquiry above alluded to, residing at Sierra Leone, says: "Deponent had a mercantile transaction with a Mr. Hilary Teague, an American subject residing at Liberia. This Mr. Teague is in the habit of purchasing goods in this colony, which he takes

It seems to me that any hope, built upon the establishment of colonies on the African coast, for the suppression of the slave trade, will prove altogether fallacious. It is in opposition, wholly, to commercial experience. There is no commodity—if human flesh may be so called—which *avarice* will not supply to a market kept open for its sale. She laughs at revenue-laws—at the penalties for smuggling—derides death, and the dangers of the deep,—scorns heaven and hell, that she may clutch her prey. There is, in my humble judgment, but one way of bringing the African slave trade to a termination—that is, *by closing the market everywhere.*

### *Conclusion.*

I have thus, Sir,—as I trust, without a single thought for which I should reproach myself, or the use of a single word which should justly give offence to any one living—stated in the foregoing remarks, some of my chief objections to *colonization* :—not *colonization* as it may be defended, in *theory*, by a dextrous polemic, but as it is, *in its practical operations*. If it be true, that, whilst it professes in itself a capacity for the relief of the country from slavery, it has, after seventeen years of trial, *fair and favorable trial*—done nothing that has *touched* the matter ; if it *falls in with*—though it may not have *originated*—uncharitable feelings, unscriptural and unreasonable prejudices, and inhuman laws against the colored population among us ; if it occasions a deterioration of Christian character in the great body of those who emigrate—and *through them*, brings the Christian religion into dishonor, among the heathen—there is nothing in it, according to my poor judgment, that entitles it to the support of the patriot or the Christian. Although colonization in the West and South-West—as to any *effectual* future action, is dead—yet its ghost is unceasingly beckoning us away from the only course in which our safety lies.—Whenever any other plan of relief is submitted, colonization leaps in between it and the public mind, and pushes it aside. The poet has said “ man never is—but always *to be blessed* ”—colonization, in substance, says,

down to Liberia for sale, where a great many of the articles he purchases are in demand. Mr. Teague, in paying Mr. Lake for some goods, took the money from a bag containing about \$1,000. The word “ Manzanares ” was marked on this bag. This circumstance struck him, from the singularity of the word. Deponent has every reason to believe this bag came out of this vessel, she having been brought into this harbor subsequently, and condemned in the court of mixed commission—where it was proved that she had taken in a cargo (slaves) at the Gallinas, [a river making the northern boundary of the colonial possessions of Liberia, distinguished heretofore, without having yet lost its reputation for the slave trade.]”

slavery "never *is*—but always *to be* removed." Entertaining these sentiments of colonization, I take up with great confidence, the opinion, that, nothing of *real moment* can be done for our relief from the great evil under which we are slowly yet certainly perishing, until this community be utterly divorced from colonization in all its parts, and in all its measures.

Kentucky is, at this time, in a fearful crisis—under a mighty pressure. She must—without delay—and if she would save her life—almost with violence, throw off the incubus that is suffocating her to death—or, be content to share, in common with the *South* its sure, its hastening, its disastrous fate. Let me present for your consideration but two or three facts :—in 1790 there were in this State more than *five* whites to *one* colored person, in 1830 there were but *three* whites, and a very small fraction, to *one* colored person.

In 1800 our whole number was	220,959	
In 1810 " " "	406,511	
	Increase	185,552
In 1820 our whole number was	564,317	
In 1830 " " "	688,844	
	Increase	124,527

Deduct the increase of 1830 from that of 1820 and there will be a difference of	124,527	61,025
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Thus, it appears that, on a population-capital of 564,317, there was an increase in *ten* years of only 124,527—whilst for an equal period of ten years, there was an increase of 185,552, on a population-capital of but 220,959—demonstrating an *absolute* reduction of increase on the larger capital, below the increase on the smaller, of 61,025. During the same period—from 1800 to 1830,—the increase of the Blacks, taken *separately*, has been uninterrupted and rapid. From 1790, when the first Census of the U. S. was taken under the law of Congress, to 1830—a period of forty years, there was a *gain* in the increase of the black population, according to their population-capital, over the increase of the whites, according to theirs, for the same period, of more than 59,000

The process by which this result is produced, I may exhibit on some future occasion ; it is yet going on, producing results of the same kind with an alarming rapidity.

In refusing to look at, what is acknowledged on all hands, to be an evil—one that is becoming darker, more unwieldy, more menacing—and that is in the end, if unremoved, to over-master us—there is a want of *manhood*, which, it is believed, cannot fairly be attached to our countrymen. All

that is wanting is, that this community come up to the consideration of the subject with kind and charitable feelings—that the mass of mind among us be applied to it, not for *discussion* but *relief*—not for *triumph* but for *truth*. In this temper, let the widest discussion of the subject be invited—in *print and out of print*—*free, full, liberal, unrestrained*,—let there be no sympathy with the timid and the slothful, who cry out “let it alone, let it alone, it will cure itself,” whilst the torpor of approaching death is beginning to be felt—let associations be encouraged, having for their object the concentration of intellectual effort, and the diffusion of intelligence throughout the whole mass of our population.—This will be found, as I verily believe, the most effectual method of keeping in check the rash and the imprudent—and of drawing out the matured and sober views of the patriotic and intelligent of the land.

Permit me, in conclusion, to say, that the views submitted in this communication, are entertained after long and very circumspect examination of the main subject to which they apply. Born in the midst of a slaveholding community—accustomed to the services of slaves from my infancy—reared under an exposure to all the prejudices that slavery begets—and being myself, heretofore, from early life, a slaveholder—my efforts at mental liberation were commenced in the very lowest and grossest atmosphere. Fearing the reality, as well as the imputation of enthusiasm—each ascent that my mind made to a higher and purer moral and intellectual region, I used as a *stand-point* to survey deliberately all the tract that I had left. When I remember, how calmly and dispassionately my mind has proceeded from one truth connected with this subject, to another still higher—that the opinions I have embraced are those to which such minds and hearts as Wilberforce, and Clarkson's yielded their full assent—that they are the opinions of the *disinterested* and excellent of our own country; I feel well satisfied that my conclusions are not the fruits of enthusiasm. When I recur to my own observation, through a life already of more than forty years—of the anti-republican tendencies of slavery—and take up our most solemn state paper and there see, that “all men are created equal, and have a right that is inalienable to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” I feel a settled conviction of mind that *slavery, as it exists among us*, is opposed to the very essence of our government—and that by prolonging it, we are *living down* the foundation-principle of our happy institutions. When I take up the Book of God's love, and there read “whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them”—my conviction is not less thorough, that slavery *now* is sinful in his sight.

But one word more. The views contained in this letter are my own, and they have been the result of my own reading, observation and thought. I am a member of no anti-slavery society—nor have I any acquaintance, either personally or by literary correspondence, with any of the northern abolitionists.—No one, beside myself, is committed by any thing I have said.

With great respect,

JAMES G. BIRNEY.

*Mercer County, July 15, 1834.*